

TO UNDERSTAND VIA THE HEART
IS NOT TO UNDERSTAND.
Michel Eyquem de Montaigne

Reason's last step
is recognising that
an infinity of things
surpass it.
Blaise Pascal

The mind leads, the
emotions follow.
Ayn Rand

Feelings are not supposed to be logical.
Dangerous is the man who has
rationalised his emotions.
David Borenstein

People who are
sensible about love
are not capable of it.
Douglas Yates

Anger is never
without a reason,
but seldom a good
one.
Benjamin Franklin

I hate to lose more
than I like to win.
Jimmy Connors

THE HEART HAS ITS REASONS
WHEREOF REASON KNOWS
NOTHING.
Blaise Pascal

Love is the only
way to grasp
another human
being in the
innermost core of
his personality.
Victor Frankl

Reason is, and ought only to
be the slave of the passions,
and can never pretend to
any other office than to
serve and obey them.
David Hume

Some states of feeling can
and others cannot survive
an honest scrutiny.
J. L. Mackie

No one is truly
literate who cannot
read his own heart.
Eric Hoffer

People think love is an
emotion. Love is good sense.
Ken Kesey

Depend on it Sir,
when a man knows
he is to be hanged
in a fortnight, it
concentrates his
mind wonderfully.
Samuel Johnson

If you can once engage people's pride, love,
pity, ambition (or whatever is their prevailing
passion) on your side, you need not fear
what their reason can do against you.
Lord Chesterfield

Aims

By the end of this chapter you should:

- be able to offer various ways of defining and characterising emotions and feelings
- be able to discuss the relationships between emotions and physical signs of emotions
- be able to comment on both traditional and modern views of the interplay between emotion and reason
- understand what we mean by the feeling of intuition
- understand the role of qualia in our emotional experiences
- understand why our emotions are not 'raw' but products of our engagement with the world.

Introduction

Our everyday decisions are often based largely in the emotions: we eat food because we enjoy the taste or dislike hunger; we avoid arguments because they upset us; we have friends because they make us feel good; we attempt to achieve a good Diploma score because of our pride (or, perhaps, not). So our immediate experiences are thick with emotions; we cannot get away from them even, as we saw in the previous chapter, when we look at reasoning, which appears to be totally a domain of the intellect. And in fact it is quite comforting to see that the rather abstract ideas of rationalism can be tempered, perhaps humanised, by integrating them with the messier but more vital emotional side of our lives.

There has been a philosophical tradition of separating feelings and emotions from other aspects of human life, especially reasoning, and this has usually downplayed the role of emotions. In Plato's metaphor, wisdom and passion are two horses pulling the chariot in different directions; they oppose each other and only one can prevail. The common view has been that we must overcome our emotions and listen to 'the voice of reason'. Anyone operating under today's technological paradigm may view the emotions as a troublesome remnant from humanity's savage past – they are for small children and stupid adults. Problems are solved by the application of reason, by the appliance of science and by appeal to the 'higher' faculties. Phrases such as 'If only he would stop being so angry and listen to reason' or 'Will you just calm down and stop being so emotional?' are common enough, and they tell us about how we view our feelings and reason.

This negative approach has rubbed off on those areas that deal with this aspect of our 'inner life', especially when they malfunction. In many cultures, emotional unbalance is a source of shame in a way that a broken leg is not (it has been said, for example, that neurotics build castles in the sky, psychotics live in them and psychiatrists collect the rent – but few would mock 'regular' doctors in the same way). We often do not examine our emotions with the care that they deserve – we merely experience them passively. As a result, we sometimes tend to have stereotypical and perhaps even naïve views of what emotions are, and what role they play in acquiring knowledge.

- A** To what extent are emotion and reason separate things?
B Do you agree that we tend to treat the two as separate things and that emotion is often looked at with suspicion, if not dismissed outright?

Having noted the relatively low status of feelings as vehicles of knowledge (rightly or wrongly), we should remember that we have been looking at human knowledge, and our search for certainty is very much a human search. In our everyday lives we use our feelings as guides all the time, and they are worthy of study. A view of human nature that ignores our feelings is short-sighted – although the title *homo sapiens* (literally, *thinking man*) encourages us to do just that. Emotions should form an important part of our search for knowledge, but this is not to say that they should be immune to rational criticism. We will be vigilant for problems of knowledge, but we will not dismiss the emotions. Instead, we shall try to find a place for these complex and difficult things.

To start, let us consider the various feelings that humans have.

Classifying the emotions and feelings

The seven emotions: pleasure, anger, sorrow, joy, love, hate, desire.

Toegye (Korean philosopher 1501–70)

The six emotions: fondness, dislike, delight, anger, sadness, joy.

Hsün Tzu (Chinese philosopher, third century BC)

The two lists of emotions above immediately alert us to the familiar problem of language. A dictionary definition says that feelings and emotions are particular types of mental states, but this is hardly helpful. If we are to discuss feelings and emotions in a meaningful way, we need to decide how we are going to name and classify the experiences we have, and how we are going to communicate clearly. To start with, what is the difference between a feeling and an emotion? Rather than refer to a dictionary, let's look at how we actually use the words.

- A** Here is a list of things you can feel. Add some others.

joy	relief	hungry	certainty
love	wonder	happy	tired
sadness	wonderful	helpless	irritated
anxious	grief	hopeful	dizzy
afraid	energetic	merciful	longing
lust	dread	lucky	relaxed
envy	empathy	content	embarrassed
rapture	disgust	pity	surprised
angst	apathy	vulnerable	amused
gratitude	sympathy	guilty	horrified
jealous	sweaty	hatred	excited
confident	cold	sleepy	annoyed
compassion	stupid	anger	proud
awe	ashamed	bored	nervous

- B** How many different types of love can you think of? What does this tell you about the list?
C Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has pinpointed an interesting sensation/emotion, which not everyone has experienced. He calls the effortless physical or intellectual state associated with an exceptionally high level of expertise at a particular task as 'being in flow':

You yourself are in an ecstatic state to such a point that you feel as though you almost don't exist. I've experienced this time and again ... I have nothing to do with what is happening. I just sit there watching in a state of awe and wonderment. And it just flows out by itself.

He says that this feeling is common among many, including athletes, composers, surgeons and engineers. Diane Roffe-Steinrotter, an Olympic gold-medallist skier, said that during her performance she 'felt like a waterfall'. Have you ever had such an experience?

- D** If you said 'I feel ...' and finished the sentence with a word from the list above, it would make sense. Does that mean that every item in the list is a feeling?
E It is clear that the feelings above are of several different types. Identify a few types of feeling that are distinct from each other.
F Distinguish carefully between emotions, feeling and moods.

A very interesting mood is the existential 'angst', which has been described as 'the mood in which we rediscover our freedom and autonomy'. To get at this complex feeling, let me describe the experience I have when I am driving on a motorway – the sudden and rather sickening realisation that I could quite easily swerve into the oncoming traffic, almost certainly causing a serious, if not fatal, accident. Nothing is actually stopping me other than myself (irrespective of ethics, laws, expectations, etc.). I could do it. A similar feeling happens while waiting for a train – I could throw myself under the wheels. You can probably come up with similar situations, but the conditions do not have to be extreme. You could start dancing on the table now, ignoring your teacher's requests to stop; he or she could join you. Or anyone could rip up their books and throw them in the air. In everyday

life we may sometimes think that we have no options, but the reality is that we always have many, many choices. The awareness that these choices are real is what we can call angst. Some describe angst as liberating, others as oppressive.

There are many ways of classifying emotions, but we can quickly identify a few likely categories. The list makes clear that we use the words 'feeling' and 'emotion' in different ways, because the feelings of being hungry, sweaty, dizzy, sleepy and cold are not what we would call emotions in themselves (although we may certainly have an emotional reaction towards, say, hunger). These physical feelings can be separated from the others, which seem more mental in nature, and we will not consider them any further (note, however, that the categorisation is not without its own problems – where would you put the feelings of being relaxed or lust?).

The rest of the items on the list seem likely candidates for emotions, though we might wonder about putting certainty in the same category as anger. Imagine the state of feeling either condition – they seem rather different. Perhaps the same could be said of fear and awe.

Here are two suggestions that have been made for further classifying the emotions. We can distinguish between:

- the instinctive emotions, such as anger or love
- the social emotions, such as guilt or shame.

We can also distinguish between:

- the inward-looking emotions, such as fear, where we are 'drawn into ourselves'
- the outward-looking emotions, such as wonder, where we are drawn 'out of ourselves'.

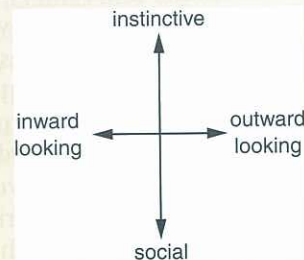
The classifications are interesting because they emphasise two very different aspects of emotion (remember there are always problems of classification – it is never neutral). The first one stresses the origins of the emotions, and perhaps leads us to ask which emotions are 'under our control'. The second takes a less scientific and more humanistic approach, asking about the nature of our experience in relation to the world.

A Plot the emotions in the list on page 101 (and any others that you care to name) on the axes.

B Is it easy to classify the emotions on either axis? If not, what, if anything, does this tell you about the classifications?

C Where does 'certainty' go?

D Are there any 'better' classifications of emotions?



Before we leave the idea of classification, having done our best to achieve some sort of clarity in our thinking, let's remember that our descriptions are not the real thing; that any classification

is an aid to insight, not a description of reality, and that, however useful a map is, it is not the territory. As G. K. Chesterton says:

Man knows that there are in the soul tints more bewildering, more numberless, and more nameless than the colours of an autumn forest ... Yet he seriously believes that these things can, every one of them, in all their tones and semitones, in all their blends and unions, be accurately represented by an arbitrary system of grunts and squeals. He believes that an ordinary civilised stockbroker can produce, out of his own inside, noises which denote all the mysteries of memory and all the agonies of desire.

What is an emotion?

It is no longer my moral duty as a human being to achieve an integrated and unitary set of explanations for my thoughts and feelings.

Bronwyn Davies

Now that we have considered feelings and emotions, and bearing in mind the warning of the last paragraph, we need to tackle head-on this very difficult question. If we are going to appeal to emotions as a way of knowing, and if we are going to hold that they are a vital part of human nature, then we ought to try to understand precisely what it is that we are talking about. It is clear that an emotion is some sort of experience, but what kind precisely? We have suggested earlier that 'blue', or colour in general, is an experience, but this seems to be a completely different type of experience.

The scientist Edward O. Wilson has defined an emotion as 'the modification of neural activity that animates and focuses mental activity' which may not be incorrect, but which seems to miss the vital human element – the experiential part of an emotion. To define an emotion in this way is like describing music as a collection of air vibrations – helpful for scientific experiment but not for philosophical inquiry.

If we are, in this section at least, to focus on the human side of emotion then we should notice immediately that emotions are bound up with our bodies – they have a very visceral component. When we are angry or frightened, for example, our heart thumps; blood is re-routed from the gut and skin (which is why we feel 'butterflies') to the muscles; our breathing speeds up; and adrenaline releases fuel from the liver. Now the conventional wisdom is that physiological manifestations are expressions and results of inward emotion – after all, the two go together. So surely the emotions cause the changes in the body?

However, an alternative has been suggested. Try to imagine as vividly as you can some extreme emotion, which has a very strong bodily effect (say anger, nervousness or fear – recall an experience you have had). Now try to subtract these bodily feelings. What are you left with? William James, who first suggested this experiment in 1884, suggests that all that is left is 'a cold and neutral state of intellectual perception' – that is, a thought with no emotions at all. On the basis of this, he argues that our emotions do not cause our bodily responses but are in fact caused by them. So according to this, something happens and the external event produces bodily responses (elevated heart rate, etc.). The perception of these events in their totality then

constitutes the experience of emotion. What this means is that emotions are purely and simply our experience of a bodily reaction to an event.

- A** Is the thought experiment correct? Try it yourself and see if you agree with James.
- B** This theory (which psychologists call the James–Lange theory, as C. G. Lange argued a very similar case) seems to reduce emotions to experiences of our bodily reactions to our surroundings. What is your emotional reaction to this theory?
- C** If James is correct, then each distinct emotion is associated with a distinct set of bodily responses. Think about your emotional experiences to determine if this is the case.
- D** Does the theory cover all emotions, or are some not correlated with physiological effects?

There seems to be an element of truth to James' idea – presumably the thrill of, for example, a rollercoaster is to do with the effect on our bodies, and it is well known to runners that the release of endorphins during exercise can cause a natural high. So physical effects can cause emotions. However, subsequent experiments have shown that it is more complex than simply cause and effect; that there is more to emotion than response to bodily effects. For example, when injected with adrenaline, most subjects in a psychological experiment said that they felt elevated heart rates, butterflies, that they were clammy, and so on – but not emotional as such. Some said they felt 'as if' they were angry, but they were clear that they were not. Some careful thinking indicates that our whole awareness and knowledge of a situation must be involved. For example, if we are on a rollercoaster then we may experience exhilaration; if we are in a serious car accident from which we walk away unscathed but which duplicates the physical experience of the rollercoaster, then our emotional experience is likely to be very different. We cannot separate the emotions from the intellect and knowledge in a simple way. So we should delay an answer to the question of what an emotion is until we have looked into this in a little more detail.

Emotion, reason and knowledge

The practically real world for each of us, the effective world of the individual, is the compound world, the physical facts and emotional values in indistinguishable combination. Withdraw or pervert either factor of this complex result, and the kind of experience we call pathological ensues.

Stephen Pinker

There is one uncontroversial sense in which knowledge and feeling are separate things – my desire to be famous is not the same as the knowledge that I am famous; my grief at my friend's death is not the same as my knowledge that my friend is dead.

This much is clear. There is, however, a long tradition of working up such distinctions into complete dualistic accounts of human nature. This has led to the commonly held notion that emotions are hot, urgent and irrational impulses that come from the body, and reason is the cool, reflective analysis that comes from education and civilisation. In this way of thinking, our emotions are 'forces' or 'substances' of some sort. If we examine the way we speak about the emotions, we find that the metaphorical way we conceptualise them reflects this. Consider the following:

- She could barely contain her joy.
- Don't bottle your rage up – go on, let off some steam!
- There isn't an ounce of goodness in her.
- She has a really nasty side to her.
- Her mother's death hit her very hard.
- Compassion welled up inside her.

If we liken ourselves to boats, then under this model the emotions are the tides. They push us around, whether we like it or not, and we have no control over them. Moreover, they are not dependent on cognition, reason or perception. We can use our reason to try to keep the emotions in check, though we need to be careful not to go too far because the emotions are the source of wisdom, innocence, authenticity and creativity, and to repress them is dangerous. The 'dark forces' can overwhelm us at times, and we are helpless before them.

This 'tidal view' paradigm dominates the way western societies view emotions, as witnessed by so many films, songs and self-help books. There is an element of truth in this paradigm – there are times when someone is literally out of control through grief, rage, hatred or guilt – but is anyone ever out of control from hope, compassion or gratitude?

- A** Why is it that the notion of a reasonable man 'giving way' or 'losing control' to his emotions is a very popular theme in films and books, whereas the reverse seems rather dull and uninteresting? What does this say about our popular culture?
- B** Have you ever been out of control due to strong emotions? How did it feel?
- C** Which emotions can 'take over'? Do they have a common characteristic?

So far we have considered the very strong impulses – rage, grief, fear – all of which can be overwhelming. But we might also say that we are helpless before our emotions in a different, perhaps more subtle way. Imagine that you are in a situation where you feel awe (it doesn't matter if it is the view of some mountains; the stars at night; a mathematical insight; anything will do). Is it your decision to feel awe? Did you choose to feel it? Can you control your emotions?

The same argument applies to any emotion. When it happens, did you choose it? Imagine times you have felt disgust, happiness or hope. Were you in control? Most people say that they were not. This is sometimes taken as evidence for the view that we are helpless before our emotions, and that they are irrational.

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However, if we take a slightly broader conception of the role of reasoning in emotions then we can see that this is not necessarily the right interpretation of the evidence. Let's look more closely at rage and relaxation. Answer the following questions:

When might we go into a frenzy of rage?

- When our family is threatened.
- When someone tells us a joke we find funny.
- When we see a terrible injustice.
- When we have won a valuable prize.
- When our lives are threatened.
- When we see a good friend unexpectedly.

When do we feel relaxed?

- When we are on holiday.
- Just before bungee-jumping for the first time.
- At the end of the day before sleep.
- In a traffic jam on the way to the airport.
- After exercising.
- During an argument.

The answers to these questions tell us something important – that we only go into a frenzy, that we only feel relaxed, when it is 'reasonable' to do so. We do not go into a frenzy of rage when we hear a funny joke; we do not feel relaxed during an argument. Instead we feel 'appropriate' emotions relevant to the situation at hand. In other words, there has to be a reasoned judgement before we 'know' what emotion to feel. Reason must operate on something – as we have seen it does not operate in a vacuum, but requires premises and logic – so we need the input of the senses so that the reasoning can take place. In retrospect, this is perhaps rather obvious – we cannot feel emotion about something if we don't know anything about it. So the emotions are not separate from our more familiar ways of knowing. In fact, they cannot be or we would be as likely to feel joy over a terrible tragedy as we would grief.

- A** Consider the emotion of 'jealousy'. If I am to be jealous, what judgements must I make?
- B** Choose another emotion and identify what must be rationally understood before the emotion can be felt.
- C** Here is a quote from Bertrand Russell that some people find moving:

I must, before I die, find some means of saying the essential thing which is in me, which I have not yet said, a thing which is neither love nor hate nor pity nor scorn but the very breath of life, shining and coming from afar, which will link into human life the immensity, the frightening, the wondrous and implacable forces of the non-human.

Small children would not find this moving, nor would many adults. Much of this comes down to individual temperament, but suppose we found a thousand people who said that they did find it moving. Would these people have anything in common, such as education or intellectual ability? What rational processing must go on before such a statement can be moving?

- D** Are there any emotions that require no rational processing?

This idea is reflected in some criminal codes, where there is the concept of 'reasonable provocation'. Under some circumstances, a 'reasonable man' may 'reasonably' become 'uncontrollably angry and violent'. Adultery of a spouse (but not a fiancée), for example, or a blow to the face (but not a boxing of the ears) are often considered reason enough.

So it might appear, at the moment, that emotion comes after empirical data has been processed rationally. In this sense, we might think that emotion is derivative from these two primary ways of knowing. This is not so surprising – in our long search for certainty we have not yet managed to find direct, unmediated 'facts' so maybe we were asking a bit much from emotional knowledge.

But this cannot be the whole story. There is a world of difference between my knowledge that, for example, 'there are nine planets in the solar system' and, my knowledge that 'my friend is dead'. Even though both pieces of knowledge convey information, and both require certain rational interpretation for me to understand them, my relationship to the pieces of knowledge is quite different. Even ignoring the question of how our bodies respond to emotionally charged information, my friend means something to me in a way that the solar system does not. In a human sense, information about my friend *signifies*. This may be the key to getting a handle on the slippery nature of emotions. I can know anything about anything, but I can only feel about things/people that have some personal impact on myself. (A possible exception is the emotion of wonder – do the stars or mountains have any personal impact on me other than the emotion they evoke?)

To make this clearer, let us perform a little thought experiment. Imagine a person with no emotions. For this person, the world exists as it is, with no shades of approval or desire. For him, everything is of equal value; he has no liking for any thing or any person, and no dislike either. The world is neutral to him, and no activity or project has anything to commend itself over inaction. This may sound boring to you, but it is not for him, any more than it is interesting. Now we ask, what is this person's engagement in the world?

The answer must be none. This person can have no engagement in the world for such an engagement would necessarily indicate that some part of the world was more important to him than another, but we know that this cannot be the case. In fact, he would have no interest in any human relationship, in any work or in any play. He would have no desire to live or die. It seems then, arguably, that far from some Spock-like character, this emotionless being is an impossibility. It is hard to see if we would even want to call such a person alive. Even if he were alive, would he be a person? With no emotions there can be no goals, and no being-in-the-world, as some philosophers have called it.

- A** What would it be like to be this emotionless being?
B Could a race of sentient but emotionless aliens exist?
C Do all animals therefore have emotions? Does this question present the above account with difficulties? If so, state the difficulties precisely, and try to offer a solution.

It seems then, that the key is to focus on our relationship with the world, and what our emotions do to represent that. To our imaginary, emotionless man, the world is not differentiated; metaphorically it is all a neutral grey. But our world is 'lit up' according to our purposes and priorities, and emotions are the lights.

- A** This view suggests that emotions play a central role in our cognition and in our interactions in the world; that they represent important features. If we focus on this idea of 'representation', then we are reminded of empirical knowledge and the way that our senses provide us with a map of the world. Compare the emotions with some qualities which may appear to be in the world but are, in fact, in our minds. Are there analogies to be made between the emotions and concepts such as 'colour', 'pain', 'brightness' and so on?
B The philosophers Sartre and Heidegger have said that moods 'disclose features of the world to us'. What features might they mean by this? Could they mean something other than the 'obvious' physical features? How does this relate to what we have said here?
C Explain in your own words, and with your own examples, this view of emotions. Do you agree with it?

This view may answer the charge that the emotions are leftovers from our pre-sapient days. Rather than mere distractions, they are vital characteristics of any human being engaged in a physical world which is indifferent to human needs. Though enigmatic, the poetic and coherent logic of emotional experience is therefore a central aspect of human life.

Intuition

The seeds of wisdom that are to bear fruit in the intellect are sown less by critical studies ... than by insights ... and flashes of intuition.

Carl von Clausewitz

You may have noticed that in focusing on emotion we have passed by an important class of feeling – 'intuition'. It does not seem to be an emotion, but all of us know the experience of a hunch, a feeling that we can't explain, and it seems to be very different from the feeling of anger or cold. We start with a few examples.

Case 1: Tony is a relationship counsellor. He is currently seeing Andy and Barbara who are having terrible problems. They both attend their session every week without fail, say all the right things and appear to be making progress, but Tony feels there is something wrong with Andy's approach. He doesn't know why, but he has a hunch that Andy doesn't really want to save the relationship. Tony engineers a situation to get Andy on his own for a minute and he asks him directly. Andy admits he is having an affair and is thinking of leaving Barbara.

Case 2: Igor is a physicist and has spent the last few months working with a team on the design of a complex and costly experiment. His role was minor, and he is confident that he completed his work correctly, but he has had doubts that the overall design is sound. He and his colleagues have discussed the matter, but Igor cannot pinpoint the problem, and the experiment goes ahead. Everything seems to work, but as the results come in it is clear that they are not adequate, and that some fundamental part of the design was, after all, flawed.

Case 3: Jaya is a young woman with a ten-month-old daughter, Nidhi. She spends each day looking after her, in a routine of feeding, playing, sleeping and so on. Recently, she has begun to worry about Nidhi's health, even though she seems perfectly happy and healthy. The family can see nothing wrong and thinks that Jaya is worrying about nothing. But she is sure, so she takes Nidhi to the doctor for tests. Although the doctor can find nothing wrong from an initial examination, further tests reveal a mild infection of the sinuses.

Case 4: Henri Poincaré was a mathematician working around 1900. He wrote in his diary:

For fifteen days I strove to prove that there could not be any functions like those that I have since called Fuchsian functions. I was then very ignorant; everyday I seated myself at a worktable, stayed an hour or two, tried a great many combinations and reached no results. One evening, contrary to my custom, I drank black coffee and could not sleep. Ideas rose in crowds; I felt them collide until pairs interlocked, so to speak, making a stable combination. By the next morning I had established the existence of a class of Fuchsian functions, those which come from the hypergeometric series; I only had to write out the results, which took but a few hours.

- A** Recall a time when you had a powerful intuition that turned out to be right. How do you explain it?
B Does your intuition ever mislead you?

We have all had feelings like these – feelings which can't really be justified at the time, but which are strong and, as it turns out, correct. We will distinguish this particular feeling from others by calling it an **intuitive feeling**, or simply, **intuition**, and we ask what is the nature of this feeling and how does it generate knowledge in such an apparently magical way?

Of course, we immediately run into a problem here, which is that the very nature of intuition means that it is partially beyond explanation – if we could explain it, it would not be intuition any more! If Jaya had noticed that Nidhi's nose was blocked, or had Poincaré solved his problem in the usual way, then these would be familiar examples of the use of evidence and reason. By their very nature, specific incidents of intuition are inexplicable. This leads some to claim that intuition is some sort of sixth sense, mystical or magical in nature. But we need to be a little careful in coming to rash conclusions prematurely. Even if we cannot completely explain specific incidents, we may be able to make some general progress towards understanding the phenomenon.

Consider what has actually happened – a conclusion has been reached without a conscious, logically defensible process. In other words, you seem to know something without knowing how you know it. Put like this, it does not seem so strange, but notice that this is quite radically opposed to the model of reasoning that we have seen in earlier chapters, where we carefully set up 'pyramids' of logical reasoning in order to justify a conclusion.

Consider the following questions:

- How do you know how to catch a ball?
- How do you know that nothing in this sentence breaks the rules of grammar?
- How do you know that you are happy today?
- How do you know how to write your name?
- How do you know how to indicate to someone that you find them attractive?
- How do you know that $1 + 1 = 2$?
- How do you know how to keep your heart beating?
- How do you know that pleasure is better than pain?
- How do you know that you love your favourite type of music?
- How does an animal know anything at all?

In each of these cases, we might be hardpressed to explain our answer in a conscious, logically defensible way. But to ask for justification in these cases seems rather to miss the point of the activity. Do we really need to find a deliberate, logically valid way of justifying our answers to these questions? Is such a justification even possible? Perhaps intuition is, by its nature, opaque and we should be content to leave it there.

However, remembering that we have tentatively defined knowledge as justified, true belief, and having spent a good deal of time looking at the nature of reasoning and justification, we should be suspicious of 'knowledge' that we know without knowing how we know it. If we don't know how we know, then we can't justify our knowledge. But not requiring justification for knowledge opens the door to all sorts of trouble (as the justification is often the way we determine whether or not we will accept the knowledge as likely to be true). If we do not ask for justification, then we are driven to the unpalatable conclusion that we must let intuition be the final arbiter of questions such as:

- Is the Earth flat?
- Are women superior to men?
- Are blacks superior to whites?

The history of thought shows that trusting intuition can be a very dangerous thing as well as a marvellous one.

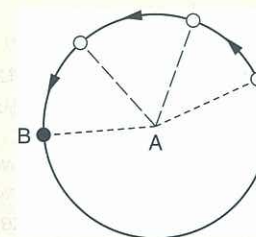
- A** Can you say when we should rely on intuition and when we should not? Are there clear cases when it is appropriate to use intuition and others when it is not? Or do we need intuition to answer this question?
- B** If we refer to knowledge as justified, true belief then we might say that intuition seems to fall down on the justified part. Or does it?

- C** You are not able to state the rules of grammar (they are not known in totality), but you obey them nearly all the time when you speak. Does this mean that your grammatical knowledge is based on intuition? If so, does the fact that we learned our language skills mean that we also learned our intuition?
- D** If intuition is not rational, it may be irrational or non-rational. Alternatively, it may be rational after all. Which of the three options do you go for? What is the difference between the first two anyway?

If we are to rely on intuition in at least some cases, then the obvious question to ask is whether or not it is likely to give us reliable knowledge. Our examples have all suggested that it does, but that may say more about our examples than about our intuition. We have seen that all the other ways of knowing have some fundamental problems, or at least limitations. This means we should suspect that intuition is unlikely to be a totally certain path to truth.

Answer the following problems about everyday situations. Do not analyse the problems but go with your gut reaction:

- A** You are jogging along and you drop a tennis ball. Does the ball land:
- 1 directly below the point where you dropped it
 - 2 behind the point where you dropped it
 - 3 ahead of the point where you dropped it.
- B** If you drop a solid metal ball the size of your fist from a tall building, it takes eight seconds to hit the ground. How long will a solid metal ball twice as big take?
- 1 4 seconds
 - 2 16 seconds
 - 3 8 seconds.
- C** You go to a party where there are 40 people. How likely is it that any two of them will share the same birthday?
- 1 Very likely – about a 90 per cent chance.
 - 2 Quite likely – about a 50 per cent chance.
 - 3 Very unlikely – about a 10 per cent chance.
- D** Consider the plan view shown here. It shows, from above, a ball attached to a string being swung around a central point A. When the ball is at B, the string is cut. In what direction does the ball go?



E Suppose you have a toy boat with a metal weight on it floating in a tank of water. You mark the water level on the side of the tank. Then you take the weight off the boat and drop it in the water. Where is the water level now?

- 1 Above the original water level.
- 2 Below the original water level.
- 3 At the same level as the original water level.

F Although you feel fine and perfectly well, you go for a routine check-up with your doctor. After examining you, she tells you that it seems that you have a very rare disease – only one in 10,000 people suffer from it. To be sure, she administers a test. The test is not perfect – but if you have the disease, the test is 90 per cent likely to spot it, and if you do not have the disease, the test is one per cent likely to tell you that you do.

When the test comes back it is positive. How likely are you to have the disease?

- 1 Very likely (90 per cent or more)
- 2 Reasonably likely (50 per cent)
- 3 Very unlikely (1 per cent).

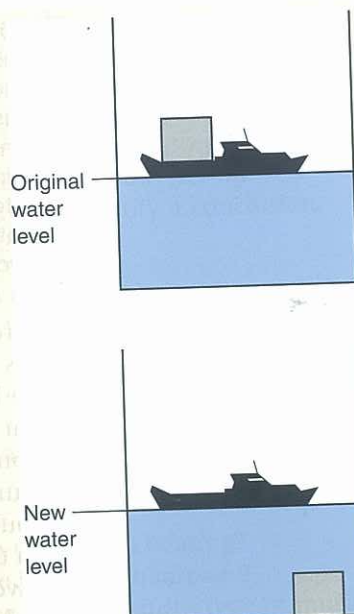
Now, if you have had formal training in these areas, go back and answer the problems by analysis rather than by intuition.

Although these six questions can be answered by mathematical or physical analysis, they are well within our everyday experience, and so we should find we have an intuitive idea about the answers. Surprisingly, what we find is that most people get most of the questions wrong. Problem E above was presented to three exceptional physicists – Robert Oppenheimer (leader of the Manhattan project to develop the atomic bomb), Felix Bloch (Nobel Prize laureate) and George Gamow (a renowned quantum theorist), and they all got it wrong when doing it by intuition.

A What does this tell us about intuition?

B These examples were based in a certain type of problem. Why do you think intuition seems a poor guide here when these types of problems are so familiar?

C Are there other areas where intuition would be a better guide? How do you know? (Remember that we have a tendency to remember the times that things worked rather than when they did not; if our intuition was correct once but failed nine times then we may tell the story of the success, whereas in reality it has a 90 per cent failure rate.)



While intuition clearly has elements that are valuable and mysterious, and despite what we have said above, it seems a little far-fetched to claim that intuition is independent of reason. To go back to our earlier examples, Tony's intuition was a very reasonable one in the sense that it was clearly based on his experience as a counsellor and the situation at hand. He didn't suddenly get the intuition that the important factor was the alignment of the stars or the colour of his shirts. And we would be astonished to find that Igor had an intuition about Jaya's child, or that Jaya had a flash of inspiration which helped Poincaré solve his problem. We have intuition in areas with which we are familiar. This suggests that intuition and reason may not be so far apart after all.

A Have you ever had an intuition in an area about which you know very little?

B Intuition often seems to operate with regard to people – you just have a feeling that someone is not honest, or is upset, or whatever. But we can have intuitions about people we have only just met, so does this disprove what has just been said?

We can preview an important idea from Chapter 10 (Empiricism).

Imagine you are in a noisy room with lots of people talking – including you. You can't hear the other conversations, but suddenly you hear your name mentioned across the room. This seems very strange ... you couldn't hear the conversation, but you heard your name.

In this case, the best explanation seems to be that there are all sorts of unconscious things going on in your mind – processing, interpretation, filtering and so on – and that you become aware of things which are deemed to be 'important', but not of anything else (it is puzzling to ask 'deemed by whom?'). Perhaps intuition works in the same way – it is the result of a complex train of analysis of which we are only ever dimly aware (at best). In the first example above, perhaps Tony noticed, almost subconsciously, that Andy appeared nervous when certain things were mentioned, and perhaps he had seen similar cases in the past where the man was having an affair. His subconscious mind then pieced together the evidence and hence the hunch.

In this case, intuition only seems like a problem because we can't explain it. The real problem is not the intuition, but that we do not have access to certain parts of our thinking processes. If we regard our brains as information-processing devices, then perhaps intuition is nothing more or less than unconscious empiricism and rationalism.

Of course this view is not without its own problems. Some have argued that it is a very limited and narrow view of intuition, and indeed of the whole human condition. Richard van de Lagemaat asks 'Why *must* our minds at some level be processing information? Do we really want to claim that all areas of thoughtful activity, such as scientific insight, writing poetry, and intellectual conversation, could in principle be reduced to a

set of rules that we are unconsciously following? Indeed, I wonder if it even makes sense to speak of following a rule *unconsciously*.'

There are two intriguing and related arguments that can be made here. The first is that it may be that we are in danger of having our thoughts limited by a particular modern paradigm – that of the mind as a computer. We should remember that it is a metaphor, not the literal truth, and while there may be many similarities between the two, we do not have to assume that the mind works as an information-processing computer. It's helpful to recall a metaphor (from times gone) of mind as a hydraulic system. Under this metaphor we had blood, valves, pipes, heat and pressure regulators; and we developed metaphors such as 'venting' and 'letting off steam'. We can now see that these are mistaken, and perhaps be wary of making the same mistake ourselves.

There's a second point related to this modern paradigm of information processing, and it concerns the nature of explanation itself. It may be that under this modern paradigm we are so used to thinking in a reductionist way that we simply cannot conceive what it might be to explain something except by breaking it down into component parts, because that is what we mean by an explanation! And if we think this, then any alternative to the idea of mind as information-processor seems like magic, and is therefore dismissed. But it is possible that intuition is an irreducible form of intellectual activity; that judgement and creativity cannot be reduced to a set of rules, but that they are whole packages, ways of knowing in themselves.

A There may be good reasons that we have an information-processing model of the mind; on the other hand it is just a model and so may be of very limited value. Do you think that intuition is an irreducible form of intellectual activity?

B Is your answer to the previous question made on logical, empirical or emotional grounds? Does it matter?

Emotional quotients and multiple intelligences

Anyone can become angry – that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way – that is not easy.

Aristotle

Traditionally, the intelligence quotient (IQ) has been seen as a good measure of 'intellectual ability' – whatever that means (IQ is not without its inherent problems, as we have seen). In schools it tended to be those students who did well in IQ tests who did well in examinations, and who, it was presumed, went on to be successful in later life (however that is defined). Of course, there were many exceptions to the rule but, by and large, it was thought that this was the case. However, experiments at Bell Labs in the USA threw up some interesting results. The researchers found that the most productive engineers were not those with the highest IQ. In a highly technical setting, one would assume that intelligence would be a key factor so this was a very surprising result. Following this discovery, there has been a great deal of interest in broadening the concept of intelligence.

The term **emotional quotient** (EQ) was coined in 1990, and is now a commonly used term used to describe the degree of control a person has over his or her emotions. EQ is often contrasted with IQ, and is usually thought to be independent – that is, an IQ score is no indicator of EQ score.

High-EQ people are supposed to enjoy high levels of self-awareness, and to use their self-knowledge to manage their lives skilfully. Most theorists believe that developing EQ is much like going to the gym – the more you practise the skills the easier it becomes. They tend to identify five areas of emotional knowledge:

- knowing your emotions
- managing your emotions
- motivating yourself
- recognising emotion in others
- handling relationships.

The focus of the EQ concept is very much one of success and self-improvement. As such, it is a little beyond our scope. Nevertheless, we can ask some interesting preliminary questions.

A In Chapter 8 on human sciences we shall see that the concept of IQ is a problematic one. This does not mean that we deny differences in ability, but that there are problems with the idea. Do such problems affect the EQ concept?

B We use the same word, 'emotion', in this section as the section on emotion, reason and knowledge on page 104, where we were more interested in 'engagement with the world'. Are we using the word to describe the same thing in each case, or is the concept different in each case?

Psychologist Howard Gardner has written extensively on the multi-faceted nature of intelligence, arguing that ability in several areas fulfils the requirements to be called a distinct intelligence. His theory of **multiple intelligences** (MI) has been refined over the years and is the basis of development plans in many US schools. Gardner lists several basic intelligences:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| ■ musical | ■ spatial |
| ■ bodily-kinesthetic | ■ spiritual |
| ■ logical-mathematical | ■ interpersonal |
| ■ linguistic | ■ intrapersonal. |

As far as the emotions go, we can see that these come under the categories of intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences. Intrapersonal intelligence is the capacity to understand yourself and subsequently to act adaptively. Those who have high ability in this area will have:

- an honest, accurate and comprehensive picture of themselves
- an awareness of their inner moods, motivations and desires
- self-discipline tendencies
- healthy self-esteem.

Interpersonal intelligence is the capacity to quickly grasp and evaluate the moods, intentions, motivations and feelings of other people. Those who have high ability in this area will have:

- sensitivity to facial expressions, gestures and voice qualities
- ability to discriminate among many personal cues
- expertise in responding effectively so as to achieve their goals.

- A** To what extent do you think that the intelligences mentioned above are separate and distinct qualities?
- B** Are the MI and EQ theories compatible?
- C** EQ and MI are both models for understanding certain aspects of our cognitive processes. As such they represent the phenomena they are trying to study. Are they good representations? Do they leave anything out or include too much? What are the inevitable problems of representation?

If there is a good deal of truth to these theories – and certainly they seem to resonate with many people – they may lead us to look at the whole concept of ‘knowledge’ in a broader way. Perhaps we should not be focusing on what may now seem the narrow idea of ‘justified, true belief’, and we should place the ability to handle our emotions and interpersonal relationships in the category of ‘knowledge’. This would mean that we would have to expand our definition, but arguably this is now well overdue.

- A** Few would suggest that we should have university degrees in knowing about our emotions, so should we expand our definition of knowledge in this way? If so, what would ‘knowledge’ mean?
- B** Is the whole MI/EQ idea making a simple point – that knowing how to do something is different to knowing that something is the case?
- C** Does it matter if we classify emotions as knowledge?
- D** MI and EQ are very much focused around ‘happiness’ and ‘success’ rather than knowledge. Bearing this in mind, what, if any, are the implications of these theories for our knowledge and our ways of knowing?

Emotion, experience and culture

Modern man is estranged from being, from his own being, from the being of other creatures in the world. He has lost something – what, he does not know; he only knows that he is sick unto death with the loss of it.

Walker Percy

Despite what we have seen in the previous two sections, we have missed out an important part of the study of emotions. Without denying anything that has been said, there is more to

feeling than a relationship with the world, or a ‘reasonable’ response to the world. It *feels like* something to be angry, or disgusted, or in love – and, of course, we are all intimately acquainted with our own ‘inner lives’.

Perhaps we could put it rather crudely:

$$\text{Emotion} = \begin{matrix} \text{recognition of} \\ \text{an event} \end{matrix} + \begin{matrix} \text{recognition of my} \\ \text{relation to that event} \end{matrix} + \begin{matrix} \text{something else} \end{matrix}$$

The ‘something else’ of the equation is the thing that dominates our sense of the emotion – it’s what the emotion *feels like*. Imagine the feeling of embarrassment. It is quite distinctive, it has a certain ‘taste’ and cannot be mistaken (and is separate from the sensation of shame, which often accompanies it). These feelings cannot be reduced to anything else – they are ‘simple’ in this respect, and we call them **qualia** (the singular is quale). They are notoriously difficult to describe to someone who has never felt the emotion (in this they are like the more ‘physical’ qualia such as the sensation of ‘blue’ or the smell of freshly ground coffee). Given that they are so basic to our emotions (and other sensations), there is not much that we can say about them in themselves – they just ‘are’ and they are the building blocks from which we construct our inner world.

However, even if we cannot say much about the nature of qualia themselves (how qualia can come about from a physical substrate is probably the outstanding problem in the philosophy of mind), it is interesting to examine their role in an emotion. Imagine the last time you had a blazing argument with someone (if you ever have!), preferably when you were shouting and really furious. Try to recall the qualia – most people use words such as ‘boiling’ or ‘trembling’. Now, could you be said to be really angry without that feeling or is it an essential part? It seems that the sensation is a crucial part of the emotion, but philosopher George Pitcher has asked us to imagine two situations:

- Helen arrives home to find Ingrid setting fire to her house. If Helen rushes violently at Ingrid, then must she be having the ‘boiling’ sensation of anger that we mentioned in the last paragraph?
- James is being interviewed for a job and is anxious to make a good impression. One of the interviewers, Katy, makes an insulting comment, and after that an observer might notice an icy tone creep into James’ voice when he addresses Katy. Is James angry?

Now different people interpret the thought experiment differently, but many agree with Pitcher that Helen and James are both angry, though neither is having qualia of the sort we described above. Helen will likely admit she is angry, though James may not. But then that means that both are angry without the quale of anger, which seems like a contradiction.

- A** Is it possible to be angry without realising it? Can you think of a similar example from your own experience? What about other emotions?
- B** Might we get around the problem by suggesting that there are (at least) two distinct types of anger – the ‘hot’ type and the ‘icy’ type, and that the quale associated with each one is different? Or would James still not have the right quale?
- C** Does this mean that emotions are not experiences?
- D** We offered a simple model above:

Emotion = recognition of + recognition of my + qualia
 an event relation to that event

Do we need to adjust the model in light of what we have said? If so, how?

- E** Are your emotional qualia the same as my emotional qualia? While we can never be sure about this one, what seems the most reasonable answer? (What does ‘same’ mean here?)
- F** Are your emotional qualia the same as those experienced by somebody from a different culture who speaks a different language?

The cultural aspect suggested in Part F of the questions above is a fascinating one. Anthropologists have studied cultures where grief is expressed in entirely different ways – the Inuit-Ifaluk tribe ‘cry-big’ at a death and a bereaved mother may pound her chest with her fists, while a Balinese equivalent may be far more restrained and even outwardly cheerful. What are we to make of this? Do people from different cultures really experience their emotions differently?

Those who have met and known people from a genuinely different culture seem to agree that emotional lives are broadly the same around the world, although the external displays, behaviours and rituals may vary significantly. The Ifaluk, for example, believe it is healthy to express grief energetically, whereas the Balinese believe that sad feelings are dangerous to the health and so they try to distract themselves. While the emotions may not be as different as they appear, that is not to say that they are precisely the same.

Evidence for this claim can be found in many places. Martha Nussbaum notes that, ‘*Finns cultivate and prize the emotions connected to solitary contemplation of forests; and the sense of wonder and smallness that arises.*’ Few of those born in Calcutta have experienced these forests, and so we can say with some confidence that the emotional lives of these two groups will differ, at least in this respect. We can also point to an ancient Greek word for love, *erôs*, which has a connotation of longing to own and control and which carries no implication of being loved back, and ask if this reflects an experience of love that is nuanced from ours? (It is also interesting to note that there are two other words for love in ancient Greek – *agape*, the selfless love for all people and *philia*, a mutually reciprocated love, which may or may not be platonic in nature.) There is a certain kind of highly self-conscious romantic love (which seems, in films, to involve lots of holding the back of one’s hand to one’s

forehead, and fainting), which may require a relatively luxurious and pampered lifestyle. Based as it is in the idealisation of the perfect and pure chaste female, might we not conclude that this romantic love involves emotional experiences which are simply not available to many of us today?

And, of course, today’s experiences of love are hardly the same the world over. If one is raised in a culture where sexual relations are considered dirty and embarrassing, then one’s experience of love and sex will be different to someone brought up where these things are considered natural and wonderful.

- A** Consider your own emotional life. Do you think that the way you experience love, disgust, disappointment or any other emotion has been shaped by your culture?
- B** Can you imagine having a different emotional life?
- C** There is a popular stereotype that women are ‘more emotional’ than men (in extremes, some men say that women are ‘irrational’; women counter that men are ‘emotional cripples’). In light of what has been said above, and in your experience, to what extent, if any, is the stereotype true?

Perhaps all this suggests that emotions are not as ‘raw’ and ‘immediate’ as we had imagined, but that they are filtered and moulded by our paradigms as surely as are all our thoughts. This may be a disappointment but it is hardly a surprise – did we really expect emotions to be pure and ‘true’ in some abstract sense? If our emotions are about our being-in-the-world, and the relations we have to the world as we find it, then they must be linked intimately to our needs, perspectives and individual histories. If they were not, how could they be as important to us as we know they are?

In saying this, we should remember to neither demote nor elevate the emotions to some separate and special type of experience. They are entwined so closely with reason, perception, culture and language that we should not think of all these as separate categories, but as the stuff of human life. We give the last word to Stephen Toulmin:

Is the primary task . . . to find formal solutions to abstract problems, and impose those solutions on the raw material of the world, as we experience it? Or is [it] to get acquainted with the world of experience in all its concrete detail, stating our problems and resolving them later in the light of that experience?

Where do we go from here?

A lot of the content of the last few chapters has been fairly abstract, and we must avoid the charge of being irrelevant. I hope it has been clear that these ideas have very real and important applications to both TOK and everyday life, but if ever proof was needed it will be found in the next chapter, where we examine a topic that you knowingly or unknowingly face every day. Most of us make ethical decisions on an ongoing basis using both reason and emotion, and it is to this topic we now turn.

Further reading

The last few years have seen an enormous interest in this area so you really are spoiled for choice. Two excellent books are Dylan Evans' *Emotion: The Science of Sentiment* (Oxford University Press, 2001) and Antonio Damasio's *Descartes' Error* (Quill, 1995). Another possibility is Paul Griffith's *What Emotions Really Are* (University of Chicago Press, 1998). Broader and more sophisticated is *What Is Emotion? Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Oxford University Press, 2003), edited by Cheshire Calhoun and Robert Solomon.

My favourites for mixing science and sensitivity are Stephen Pinker's *How the Mind Works* (Chapter 6; Penguin, 1997) and Thomas Lewis et al.'s *A General Theory of Love* (Vintage Books, 2001). The classic *A Grief Observed* by C. S. Lewis (Faber, 1961) was written after the death of his wife and is well worth reading. Martha Nussbaum uses her own life, poetry, literature and music to bring to life her long and difficult, but exceptional, *Upheavals of Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 2001). Robin Hogarth's *Educating Intuition* (University of Chicago Press, 2001) is a beautifully written and wide-ranging overview of current thinking on the topic of intuition; for a concrete context you could try *Reading People* by Jo-Ellen Dimitrius and Mark Mazzarella (Vermilion, 1999).

Resource file

Emotions

Paul Harkin

Since at least the time of Homer, the emotions have had pretty bad press. The *Iliad* opens with an account of 'the rage of Achilles', whose anger and wounded pride have such devastating consequences. Slightly later, the Greek tragedians offered their audiences characters such as Medea, a woman apparently so much in the grip of her spiteful jealousy, that she is prepared to sacrifice her own children to ensure her revenge.

Plato also took a fairly dim view of the emotions, regarding them as agents of tyranny which enslave the true and rational part of our nature. And it is to Plato that we originally owe the idea that reason and emotion are distinct and opposed faculties or aspects of the human psyche. The Stoics who followed him claimed not merely that the passions are disruptive and uncontrollable forces, but that they involve false attributions of value to things (and people) in the world. Such attributions, in the form of love of family and friends, for instance, make us vulnerable, since we care what happens to them. When, thanks to the Stoics' own brand of therapy, we rid ourselves of these false conceptions, we can remain clear-eyed and unperturbed – 'Stoical', as we would say – in the face of our fate, and theirs.

Later, Hume, Kant and then Freud, each in his own way confirmed the gulf between reason and passion, and the events of our own century testify to the terrible potential of hatred in its different forms. We are, as a result, well primed to share the dim view of the emotions which has been our cultural inheritance. It is the view

of Bertrand Russell, in his *History of Western Philosophy*:

'...most of the strongest passions are destructive – hate and resentment and jealousy, remorse and despair, outraged pride and the fury of the unjustly oppressed...'

While it is, of course, undeniable that emotions can be unruly and that they can and have had dreadful consequences, the good news is that many philosophers and psychologists have for some time been urging us not to infer from these facts any sweeping negative conclusions about the emotions. Better news still is that – contrary to appearances – we do not in fact hold such negative views ourselves. Our own thinking about the emotions is more ambiguous, perhaps even contradictory. We sometimes speak as if we endorse Plato's view, but in other respects our sympathies are quite different.

Literature offers some pertinent examples. In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Huck's moral education – or at least the moral precepts he has been brought up to believe – tell him to turn in the runaway slave Jim. His emotions, however, will not allow him to follow the dictates of principle, and betray his new friend. Readers of the episode, as Twain intended, are on the side of Huck's emotions. Huck himself remains unsure.

We should not take this, however, as confirmation of a conflict between brute emotion on the one hand and reasoned precept on the other. The assumption that these are distinct and opposed forces is mistaken from the start. More generally, we do not think emotions are merely sources of potential danger; danger which can only be averted when harnessed to

the constraining influence of reason. If we did, why would we think it a defect – as we surely do – to lack or be incapable of certain emotions? Camus' anti-hero Mersault, for example, (in *L'Étranger*) is notable, above all, for his emotional alienation, his inability to feel. Contrary to the Stoics, who wanted us to get rid of our emotions, we, in many respects, are anxious to feel more of them.

Underlying the wholly negative view of the emotions we can discern three basic claims:

First, emotion and reason are distinct and opposed parts of the psyche. What is emotional is irrational, and conversely, what is rational is not emotional. This is the account offered by Plato (in the *Republic*) in the form of his 'tripartite' conception of the soul.

Secondly, it follows from this that there is no question of emotions being appropriate or inappropriate. We can contrast this with the case of beliefs, where we assume that questions of appropriateness do apply (for instance; are beliefs in an immanent Apocalypse appropriate to the available facts?)

Thirdly, if the previous two points are right, they imply a picture of the sort of thing an emotion is; divorced from thought and reason, it must be something of the character of a sensation or feeling – akin to the appetites, perhaps, and the feeling of hunger.

So here we have an account of what an emotion is (a sort of sensation) and of the value it has (i.e. not much, given what it is). In case anyone should think these views are of strictly historical interest, I offer the following (not unrepresentative) quotations from the editor of *Living Marxism*,

writing recently on the subject of the media's handling of the death of Princess Diana:

'An atmosphere which puts feelings first is hardly conducive to any cool assessment of what has actually happened, never mind a critical discussion of the hows and whys behind the events. [...] Public debate was debased by an editorial elevation of feelings over facts and the insistence that the heart should rule the head.'

Here we find the same suspicion of the emotions, the same carving-up of the psyche into warring factions that we find in Plato. Lying behind Hume's view that emotion has mistakenly been allowed free rein in this particular instance – with disastrous results – is the more general suggestion that that could not but have been the outcome. It is reason that brings understanding, not emotion. The example of Huckleberry Finn should, however, already give us grounds for discontent with this easy formula.

One of the commendable developments in more recent philosophical writings on the emotions is that there has recently been a consensus that each of these three claims is false. To see why, we need to begin with the issue of what an emotion is. The temptation to think of emotion as a feeling and hence akin to a sensation, is a strong one. After all, emotions differ from thoughts, above all in how they feel. When you're angry, you feel a particular sort of way. It might seem natural, therefore, to conclude that emotions are feelings. However, for some years now, philosophers have argued against this line of thought. There are at least three considerations which can be offered against it.

In the first place, what are the feelings that are involved? Take anger, there are feelings corresponding to various physiological changes: increased heartbeat, blood rushing to the larger muscles, the release of

adrenaline, and so on. In addition, there is much that is unfelt: neuron firings and complex patterns of electrochemical and neurotransmitter activity. The difficulty is that if we consider the felt changes, it is clear that none of them is distinctive or definitive of anger. Many of them are shared with fear and other emotions.

In addition, experimental evidence also seems to support the suspicion that we could not easily identify our emotional states if this were the only basis for such judgements.

The second point is this: if feelings were the basis of our identification of our emotional states, our judgements would be inferences; we would infer the identity of the state we were in from the feelings. But while there may be some instances where this is the case, it is not the typical route to such knowledge; we seem to know 'from the inside' and not by inference. Confronted with a large lion, for example, I do not need to observe the sensation of adrenaline release, note my quickened pulse, feel the shaking in my legs and conclude from these that I am afraid. I know that without reference to these things. There must, therefore, be more to emotions than feelings.

The third point is that when we actually look at what is distinctive about different emotions, it seems clear that what distinguishes them is the thoughts that they comprise. Take fear: to fear something is to believe that it is threatening or dangerous. Or pride: to be proud is to think something is of value or deserving praise and to believe it is related to you in an appropriate way. Having these beliefs is what makes your emotion fear or pride. This is not to say that an emotion is just a set of beliefs (though the Stoics did think something like that). Most philosophers and psychologists would now say that thoughts and beliefs identify and in part constitute emotions, but that other factors such as feelings,

dispositions, pain and pleasure and so on, are also necessary. This view of the emotions – cognitivism, as it is known – therefore claims that beliefs are necessary but not sufficient for emotions. Having the beliefs alone isn't enough.

But even this much is a significant advance on Plato, Hume and the rest. For if my emotion (fear, say) is based on the belief that the object of my fear is dangerous and threatening, then, since that belief can be rational or irrational (appropriate or inappropriate to the facts) so the emotion itself can also be appropriate or inappropriate. If we accept this, all three of the claims above must be false. Since emotions are based on beliefs, they are not merely sensations, they can be appropriate, and furthermore it is a mistake to characterise the 'rational' and the 'emotional' as mutually exclusive, to think of them as distinct capacities, because they are in fact, intertwined.

Many psychologists and neurologists concur. Antonio Damasio, for instance, argues that neurological research reveals that patients whose emotional capacities are impaired as a result of brain lesions are also impaired across a range of cognitive capacities, such as the ability to prioritise, to deliberate, evaluate and make decisions. At the level of the brain too, it seems, emotion and reason are inseparable.

Although this new consensus on 'cognitive' theories of the emotions is welcome, there remains much disagreement and many unanswered questions. Some philosophers have wondered how the emotions of animals and young children fit the theory, since we hesitate in attributing beliefs to them. Others have recently rejected the cognitivist approach altogether and attempted to put feelings back at the centre of emotions.

And then there is the issue of emotional education. Psychologists

and writers such as Daniel Goleman (in his best-seller, *Emotional Intelligence*) are interested in how the emotions are educated. This is an issue that also preoccupied Aristotle, one of the few early philosophers to have endorsed the cognitive view. But if, as cognitivists claim, beliefs are not sufficient for emotion, what else has to be changed in order to

educate someone's emotions? It is one thing to get someone to believe that spiders aren't dangerous, but another to get them not to be frightened by spiders. Some therapies, however, achieve high levels of success in treating such recalcitrant emotions. But does such change amount to education? Education involves a transformation of understanding.

Cognitivism seems, however, to concede that this will not be enough. How, then, can there be real education of the emotions? This issue is of abiding general importance as well as being relevant to all putative 'philosophical therapies', from Stoicism to the present day.